

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on May 10, 2005, which was made Final. It is believed that no fees are due in connection with the present Amendment. However, in the event any fees are necessary, including for any extension(s) of time, kindly charge the cost thereof to our Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4-5, 12-16, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt, U.S. Patent No. 5,957,143. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt and further in view of Pflug et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,525,295. Claims 3 and 6-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt and further in view of Taggart et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,702,985. Claims 10-11 and 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt and further in view of Kronseder, U.S. Patent No. 5,598,859. Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt and further in view of Gudz et al., U.S. Patent No. 3,739,790. Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' admitted prior art in view of Schmidt and further in view of Taggart et al. and Rouillard, U.S. Patent No. 5,849,095.

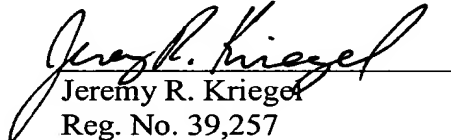
According to the Office Action, Applicants' claims do not recite the elimination of the need for pipes, valves or single-component nozzles to carry the disinfectant-steam mixture from a chamber to the packaging container to be sterilized. Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the mixed jet of heated disinfectant flows freely from the mixing nozzle onto the

packaging container. The unrestricted flow of the mixed jet of heated disinfectant results in a direct application of the mixture from the mixing nozzles to the packaging container to be sterilized. As a result, rather than being mixed elsewhere and then carried through pipes, valves, and single-component nozzles, the mixture is mixed directly at the mixing nozzle and has no opportunity to condense prior to its application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all claims of the application are in condition for allowance. The Examiner's favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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